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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the strategies involved in planning, organizing, developing, administering, evaluating, and providing materials for replication for a teacher-to-teacher network program. The data for this paper was collected as part of IMPACT II, a program designed to identify, support, document, and disseminate successful classroom-based programs developed by teachers. Critical variables such as program staff, consultants, screening committees, relationships to existing administrative structures, planning pre-operational steps, development of print and video material, formative evaluations, and public relations are reviewed. The findings provide a blueprint for setting up this type of program in a school district. (JD)

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# Administrative and Organizational Variables Affecting the Development of a Teacher-To-Teacher Network Program

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## ADMINISTRATIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL VARIABLES AFFECTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TEACHER-TO-TEACHER NETWORK PROGRAM

### Introduction

IMPACT II is a pilot program designed to identify, support, disseminate and replicate successful classroom-based programs developed by teachers. Central to the program is an on going network of teacher-to-teacher sharing through which teachers can learn from each other in an informal way. It is a concept based on a previous project titled IMPACT, a college and university level program funded and administered by Exxon Education Foundation.

Begun in February 1979, IMPACT II has an annual budget of approximately $250,000. It is run by a staff of four, administered through the Division of Curriculum and Instruction of the New York City Public Schools and funded by Exxon Education Foundation, with the Economic Development Council serving as funding intermediary to oversee fiscal and program policy.

### Program Design

IMPACT II started off with a campaign to create program awareness among teachers. Initially this was done through public service announcements on radio and television, the United Federation of Teachers newspaper, brochures, school system field memos and above all personal contacts and presentations. The objective was to solicit applications from teachers who were implementing effective teaching methods and programs which they had developed in their classrooms. What IMPACT II was offering was $300 grants with which to buy instructional materials to further these outstanding teaching methods.

The second step was the creation of a peer review board process to select the grant recipients. Selection criteria were developed by the IMPACT II staff and refined by feedback from the review committee. They emphasized program results with students, originality and potential usefulness to other teachers.

Once the selection of the first year's group of 100 teachers--called "developers"--was complete, the third step involved the dissemination of the developer programs. Various strategies were used to attract teachers who might wish to replicate or adapt these programs in their own classrooms. The primary strategy was selecting 15 developers to lead workshops for interested teachers who, in turn, would be eligible to apply for $200 replicator grants. Announcements to this effect were made through the media, especially the United Federation of Teachers newspaper, community school district newsletters and community newspapers. A catalog describing each of the 100 developer programs was printed and distributed to every New York City Public School. Other forms of publicity included videotapes illustrating several especially successful programs. Additionally, several developers made presentations at established educational forums. IMPACT II offered support services to any teacher willing to initiate the dissemination of his or her own program. The result of these efforts was the selection, that first year, of 128 "replicator" teachers. Prerequisites for receiving a replicator grant included some form of direct contact with the developer of the program either at the workshop or as a result of the IMPACT II Catalog of Programs. This was in addition to an evaluation of the replicator's application by the developer.

At this point, the teacher-to-teacher network for developers and replicators to exchange information and ideas was put into full motion. Support services for such a network included securing release time for teachers to visit each other's classes by providing funds for substitute teachers; the scheduling of additional workshops; the reproduction of instructional materials; the publication of a quarterly newsletter distributed to everyone in the IMPACT II network; producing of videotapes and other publicity devices. Another strategy for facilitating interchange among teachers was a series of award ceremonies and

receptions to honor developers and replicators and to announce new IMPACT II publications.

What remained was to monitor and carry out an evaluation of the IMPACT II program in order to assess the effectiveness of its design and procedures and to refine them accordingly for use the following year.

Implementation

Such was the basic design. We were now ready to put it all together. For example, it was essential that the small IMPACT II staff--director, program assistant, accountant and secretary--work closely together. The director set the policy and the goals of the program, and, with the help of the staff and consultants, shared the administrative responsibility for program design, organization, financial aspects and implementation. The program assistant helped develop strategies for implementation, including the outlining of tasks for staff and consultants, and also acted as liaison between the director and the teachers. Since the program assistant was in touch with numerous details of which the director was not aware, communication between the two was crucial. Also, because of the financial detail involved, the program needed a full-time accountant. His task included giving advice to teachers on where to buy needed supplies. His attitude was an important consideration because serving as liaison among vendors, teachers and administration would be extremely frustrating at times. Similarly, the secretary had to be someone with a good phone personality and excellent skills. She needed to organize a meticulous filing and record keeping system.

In planning the program, we started with the original concept developed by Exxon and the original proposal designed by staff from the New York City Public Schools. Our task was to see how we could fit the proposed program into the existing school structure as, inevitably, some aspects of the proposal were

more realistic than others. It was, therefore, important to get feedback from school administrators and evaluators before outlining our objectives and establishing grant criteria. In the process, we surveyed existing grant programs to see how they set up their criteria. We looked at brochures from other programs dealing with diffusion and dissemination--the U.S. Office of Education's National Diffusion Network, for instance. Ideas from other people involved in similar programs were also discussed. The unique thing about our program was the teacher-to-teacher network idea and that concept determined many of our planning and design decisions. For example, to get as much teacher input as possible, we conferred with the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). In fact, the cooperation of the UFT--the only organization that represents all New York City teachers--has been essential to the program from the beginning. Not only has it provided IMPACT II with many helpful suggestions, but the New York Teacher, the UFT newspaper, distributed to every teacher in the New York City Public School system, has been one of our main communication vehicles for letting teachers know about IMPACT II.

Other avenues of publicity and public relations have included direct mailings to every school principal and the UFT chapter chairman in each school, in addition to announcements in Board of Education publications (e.g. Resources, the newsletter of the Division of Curriculum and Instruction and High Points, the High School Division magazine), community newspapers, and even radio and television. (Legally, time must be set aside for public service announcements. A legitimate public service organization can make a 30 or 60 second tape which will be broadcast provided it meets standard technical requirements.) Staff also made presentations at schools, teachers' conferences and district meetings. They showed the videotape, "So We Can Teach"--which focuses on a developer working with replicators of his interdisciplinary math/science/art program, answered

questions and solicited grant applications. These presentations were effective in eliciting teacher involvement. In general, we used every form of outreach possible, keeping careful records of how teachers had learned about IMPACT II. Most of them had found out about the program from the United Federation of Teacher's newspaper.

In coordinating the review committee we worked closely with the UFT, as well as the district and high school superintendents, to select the participating teachers. For the first year, the review committee was composed of 20 people, half of whom were teachers; the other half were administrators and representatives from educational organizations like the High School Division, the United Parents Association and the Council of Supervisors and Administrators. When we asked the reviewers to return the second year, administrators and representatives from professional organizations were generally not available for the three-day review period. We, therefore, chose additional reviewers from the pool of first year developers. Thus, the committee was eventually composed of a majority of teachers. We felt that teachers were in a better position to know what was suitable for other teachers.

A more complex process was the coordination of teacher workshops. The 15 developer programs selected for workshops had to be innovative as well as representative of a cross-section of subject areas and grades. We tried to choose a substantial number of programs in critical areas: anything related to basic skills and with a special flair. To announce the workshops, we sent out attractive flyers listing each workshop with a brief description. We let teachers know that they would receive materials to take back to their classrooms and that attendance at these workshops made them eligible for replicator grants.

IMPACT II made available a consultant to help each developer plan his or her

workshop. Most of the teachers had not had any experience running workshops, so it was essential to give them the proper support. The job of the consultant was to point out that a two-hour workshop needs variety in the form of hands-on activities, filmstrips, slides, coffee break, discussion, etc. Printed materials should consist of lesson plans, samples of students' work, games and a bibliography. The consultant edited, reproduced and collated these materials in attractive folders for distribution to participants. In effect, the consultants helped train the developer workshop leaders to successfully disseminate their own programs. The better the workshop, the more teachers would be interested in replicating the program. The purpose of the workshop was enrichment--an infusion of new life into a curriculum area where the status quo had set in. To this end, photographs, posters, exhibits--anything--were used to serve as stimulus.

Since the New York City Public Schools have no provisions for scheduling workshops within the school day, we had to set them up after school hours, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. At first, the workshops were held at attractive sites in the various boroughs of New York City, but we soon learned that attendance was much better when they were held in a more central location: mid-town Manhattan. We also learned that, for some workshops, two hours was not enough time and that there were other ways of dealing with scheduling, like holding our workshops within large group meetings or conventions of professional teacher organizations.

At the enthusiastic request of teachers who had attended regularly scheduled workshops, we began to hold follow-up workshops on Saturdays and other school holidays. For example, the New York City Public Library, Jefferson Market Branch, hosted an all day workshop on "How to Create Your Own School History Reader." The workshop, which was well organized and attended, took place in a beautifully renovated room provided with audio-visual equipment

and blackboard space. It was an inspirational atmosphere in which to teach about how to research one's own school history, especially since the library itself is an historical monument. We sensed that the teachers felt rather special, if for no other reason than for the fact that a library closed to the general public had opened its doors for them and even waived its fee. It was an occasion for improving community relations.

Such feeding back and forth among teachers, administrators and institutions is important to keep in mind as it serves to both expand and strengthen the network. Examples are numerous. The Museum of Modern Art held a workshop on "Aesthetic Enrichment for the Blind and the Handicapped" at which teachers, blindfolded and in wheelchairs, were allowed to handle sculptures to simulate the museum experience of blind and otherwise handicapped students. This workshop was so impressive that the museum asked the developer teacher to lecture to administrators from other museums. In another instance, a teacher gave a workshop on "Reading Improvement through Filmmaking," at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Coincidentally, the director of the Met's Junior Museum had recently held a rather unsuccessful Super 8 workshop and, in her discussion with the IMPACT II developer, was able to learn some new methods. This director invited our teacher to use some of the museum's equipment, art materials and posters. She also asked him if he would help the Junior Museum's staff plan future filmmaking workshops.

Indeed, workshops are a very important part of the networking process. They bring teachers in direct contact with each other and with the cultural resources of their environment such as libraries, museums and theatres. Another important vehicle for networking is the making of videotapes and filmstrips. Our video series, "Take an Idea and Go Creative" (which can be seen on the educational television station besides being available on loan) illustrates several IMPACT II programs. Another videotape, "Student-Wide News Reporting," deals

with the developer and replicators of this program in which youngsters present the news of the day over the school's public address system. The program, originally used with elementary school students, has among its replicators several high school and junior high school teachers. The videotape also tells the story of how one replicator literally "took an idea and went creative" by adapting a radio program idea to video. Generally, ideas are not limited to grade level or even subject area; a program like "Student-Wide News Reporting" lends itself to a variety of interdisciplinary approaches for practically any grade level.

Another way in which IMPACT II helped foster the teacher-to-teacher network is through award ceremonies and receptions to honor developers and replicators. As a result of the recognition received, many IMPACT II teachers have come out of the classroom and begun to contact teachers and institutions. Being allowed to bask in one's own glory is not a bad idea! Besides their formal recognition aspect, these ceremonies are also conducive to socializing. Ideas flow quickly when people meet to chat. In the process, developers and replicators involved in complimentary areas can begin to help each other in various ways. For instance, there are two pre-law IMPACT II programs--one a junior high school program in Brooklyn, the other a high school program in the Bronx. The two teachers have gotten together to share resources and thus reinforce each other's program.

At the reception for the publication of the IMPACT II Catalog of Programs there was a workshop to discuss ways in which developers could handle inquiries they received--the catalog lists each teacher's name, school address and telephone number. At the reception following the workshop, the developers received informal recognition as authors of their own programs.

If the basic purpose of networking is to cut through the isolation of teachers, our quarterly newsletter, IMPACT II Star**, is a particularly

effective vehicle for teachers to express themselves. Among the regular features in every issue are a news story (e.g. an award ceremony), program highlights, an administrator's column, a series of articles written by teachers about what they are doing professionally, and tips sent in by developers and replicators is extremely important in helping to cultivate personal initiative on the part of teachers. Reading about how a teacher contacted the National Science Foundation in order to lead a workshop gives other teachers ideas on ways to widen their professional and their human possibilities.

News stories about IMPACT II in community newspapers are also vehicles for expanding the network. The New York Teacher has done stories on our award ceremonies, so have district newsletters and even the New York Times and the Daily News have covered IMPACT II. In addition, some of our teachers have been involved in radio and television interviews, which is tremendously important as it makes it possible for them to be seen and heard by millions. In view of the fact that most schools are equipped to show videotapes to students and teachers, the possibilities of this method of communication are constantly expanding.

Results to Date

IMPACT II is now at the beginning of its third year. It's expanding teacher-to-teacher network comprises approximately 171 developers and 220 replicators. In addition, we estimate that there may be as many as 326 teachers who are informally adopting programs without applying for grants. This estimate is based on developer contact logs.* In addition we have been told by some

*A random sampling of the contact logs of the first year developer teachers is the basis for the figure of 326 informal replicators. Teachers who contacted the developer for materials and subsequently applied for replicator grants were defined as formal replicators. Teachers who obtained information and materials but did not apply for replicator grants were defined as informal replicators. Using a sample of ten and projecting it to the total population of 96, we found that there could be as many as 326 informal replicators.

replicators that other teachers have requested materials from them and adopted the original developer program for their own classrooms. This is an area of informal replication that has not yet been researched.

The reception of the IMPACT II Catalog of Programs 1979-80 was so favorable that a second edition of 5,000 was printed. Several districts report that the catalog is now being used as an "idea book." Equally successful is the IMPACT II Star**, the quarterly newsletter that is enabling IMPACT II teachers to share program information, implementation experience and dissemination advice. Teacher requests for additional copies have expanded the IMPACT II Star** mailing list from 2,500 for the first issue to 4,000 for the third one.

Teachers are increasingly taking the initiative for spreading their own programs. They are making presentations at conferences sponsored by professional teachers associations; they are persuading school and district administrators to allow them to present their programs at staff meetings and special workshops; they are forming groups by subject area in order to jointly disseminate their programs.

In response to teacher initiative, business, cultural and educational organizations are actively collaborating and supporting the spread of developer programs. Teachers are being asked to give presentations at conferences and in-school workshops by offices of the Division of Curriculum and Instruction as well as museums and libraries. The UFT periodically features articles about IMPACT II, its teachers and events, and organizations like Open Doors are providing workshop and reception areas for teachers. Two spin-off programs have emerged based on the IMPACT II concept: Community School District One in Manhattan has established a District Incentive Grant Program with IMPACT II staff assistance, and the Division of Curriculum and Instruction has solicited IMPACT II program profiles for publication in its booklet: Something that Works for Me.

The Future

We are increasing our efforts to strengthen the interaction among the participating teachers; to expand, consolidate and institutionalize the IMPACT II teacher-to-teacher network; to develop bridges that enable the program concept to continue growing in the New York City Public Schools and eventually to extend to other school districts throughout the country.